

3864 Irregular News



Dress Rehearsal For WRTC14 Goes Off With No Complaints

de KM1G

Irregular News editor

In Richard Hooker’s novel *M*A*S*H*, made famous by the eponymous movie and television series, Hawkeye and Trapper John refer to themselves as “the pros from Dover.” That’s not unlike N2NT and N2NC when they arrived on-scene in Plymouth for the WRTC14 dress rehearsal a couple of weekends ago.

John and Andy (respectively, by callsign) are just a pair of friends from mid-New Jersey who both work in tech and live near each other. Until, that is, it’s radio contest weekend and they step into a phone booth and come out the trained ham killers they are. Both are long seasoned on the contest trail, and perfect for what the weekend had on tap.

That would be WRTC13, precursor to WRTC14, the World Radiosport Team Championship.

Every four years for about the past generation, two-member teams from many nations have assembled in given locations to see who, for the moment, has bragging rights. The WRTC has been called the ham Olympics, happening as it does on that four-year schedule. Previous locales have included Seattle and San Francisco in the USA; and overseas in Latvia, Finland, Russia and Brazil. This time, the next iteration of the WRTC will take place in New England, a singular honor.

WRTC has assembled a massive support team (but isn’t yet finished assembling; they need more volunteers). Head honcho Doug, K1DG, has visited many clubs to make a pitch for the Big Show. Very sensibly, the committee running WRTC14 determined to have not one, but two dress rehearsals, one of which was last year, and the final one this year. The rehearsals, and of course the actual WRTC itself, will run concurrent with the annual ITU contest,

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The N2NT operating tent, about 0300 the night before the contest. Night watchman KM1G started the beautiful Honda generator for a few minutes to take this time exposure using a combination with rear-shutter flash. (de KM1G)



N2NT’s operating position. Not yet fully evolved when this was taken, note taped position settings on transmatch for the various antennas: quickly visible, easy to switch. One learns a lot from watching world-class contesters. (de KM1G)

The beam at N2NT. In keeping with the idea of WRTC to equalize all the stations, hence eliminate everything but operator skill from the equation, every station had the same tower, beam, and inverted vees for 80 and 40 meters. The operators brought their own station equipment, including triplexers. Each station had a wonderful little Honda generator, too. The beams sported two full-sized elements on 20, three on 15 and four on ten. The towers were erected with a very clever cantilever system, so no climbing was required.





John N2NC



Andy N2NT

Stage Set for 2014 World Championships

which took place recently.

The concept behind WRTC is to have qualifying heats in the participating countries, which will send their top two-member teams to New England next year in July. Each team will be given identical stations—tower, beam, wire antennas, generator, tent, tables and chairs—and bring their own actual stations. The rigs are, by rule, limited to certain qualities, included by not limited to exciter (100 watt) power. John and Doug, for instance, brought identical Elecraft K3 rigs because, they said, “it has an amazing receiver.”

So why is all this in the *Irregular News*? Because your editor found himself involved with the whole thing, as a gofer and hanger-on (not to mention night watchman) at N2NT, one of a half-dozen stations set up in the Myles Standish State Forest, on the Plymouth-Carver line in Mass.

It was a rewarding experience, even though I didn’t stay for the whole contest. Just seeing “the boys” arrive and unpack their car, then set up and arrange the station was an education. Nothing is left to chance, and the small niceties, from padding for the chairs to snacks to sustain the operators through 24 hours, were well-thought out.

So was the triplexer. John and Andy (they used Andy’s callsign in the contest) were able to work mutiple bands on the beam at the same time.

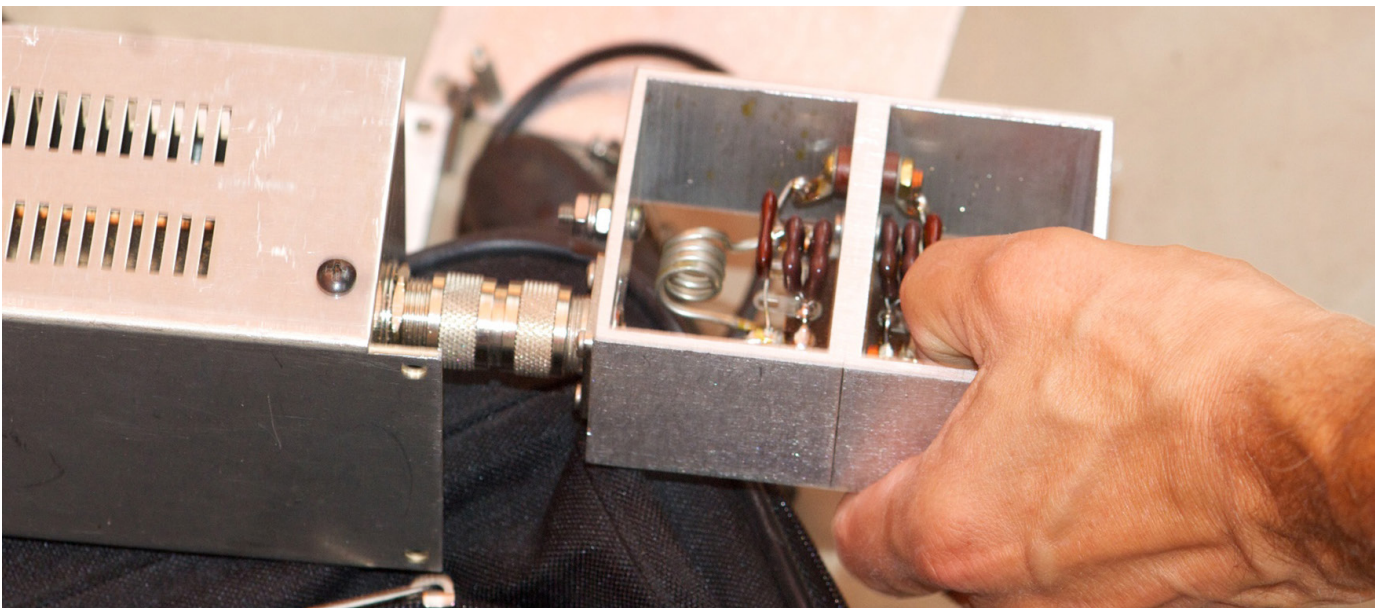
Come to that, the beam was specially designed for WRTC, and you can see links to it on the WRTC14 Internet site; just Google “WRTC14” and you will find their site and a wealth of information, including how to donate money to the effort. No donation is too small—and nobody asked me to put the pandhandling in this article, either. If you’d seen the incredible effort, the organization that’s going into WRTC14, you’d make an effort, too.

I was impressed by one thing. Anytime a group of people gets together for almost anything, you can guarantee That Character shows up. You know the one: the guy who just doesn’t play well with others, the one about whom everyone else is exchanging knowing glances when he’s not looking. Nothing like that happened at my site. Everyone was wonderful, including (perhaps especially) Andy and John, the stars of moment who didn’t act like other than normal guys.

When I heard WRTC, “The Big Time,” was coming to “a theater near me,” I determined quite some time ago it would be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of the Big Time, to see the trained killers ply their trade. It looks like I was right. If you are inclined, if you are a contester or even if you’re not, you might block out some time for the ITU contest next year, and help out with WRTC14. It’s going to be a blast!



Above: the wonderful Honda generators for WRTC are so quiet, fuel economical and dependable. Easy to use, too. Right: Doug, K1DG, on his ubiquitous cell phone before the contest. He’s one busy guy these days. Below: the clever cantilever arm for raising the 40-foot towers. No climbing required. (de KM1G)



The vital triplexer, which allowed both transceivers to be on the beam, on different bands, at the same time. (de KM1G)